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WHA FOR TOM SHANNON, PATRICK DUDDY  
WHA/BSC FOR BRUCE FRIEDMAN, BLAKENEY, MOSS, CROFT  
S/CT ARNOLD SIERRA

E.O. 12958: DECL: 07/12/2017

TAGS: PREL AR  
SUBJECT: DEPUTY FOREIGN MINISTER LOOKING FOR BILATERAL  
RE-ENGAGEMENT

Classified By: Ambassador E. Anthony Wayne for reasons  
1.4(b)and(d)

¶1. (C) Summary: This is an Action Message: please see para.  
¶1. On July 11, Deputy Foreign Minister Roberto Garcia Moritan invited Ambassador to a confidential discussion on the "future" of bilateral relations. He and Undersecretary for Foreign Relations Vicente Espeche Gil raised the need for high-level bilateral re-engagement, specifically on the bilateral relationship, but also on regional issues and regional stability. Garcia Moritan said he would like to meet with A/S Shannon, either prior to UNGA or on the margins to pursue this future-oriented discussion, and expressed hope that Foreign Minister Taiana might be able to meet with the Secretary on the margins of UNGA. Ambassador welcomed the

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initiative to talk about where we go from the current strained situation and suggested areas of possible deeper engagement could include nuclear energy and nonproliferation and revitalizing the 3 1 Tri-Border Area mechanism. (Garcia Moritan's comments on Venezuela, MERCOSUR and Bolivia reported Septel.) Garcia Moritan's outreach to Ambassador may well indicate the MFA's cautious preparations for the post-Nestor Kirchner period when they anticipate a more vigorous and engaged (and less antagonistic) foreign policy from the presumed winner of next October 28 presidential elections, Cristina Fernandez de Kirchner. End Summary.

¶2. (C) On July 11, Ambassador and A/PolCouns met with Deputy Foreign Minister Roberto Garcia Moritan and Undersecretary for Foreign Relations Vicente Espeche Gil, at Garcia Moritan's invitation. Garcia Moritan told Ambassador that he wanted very informally to discuss with the Ambassador ways the two governments can "reestablish contact" at the higher levels and focus on "the future." He suggested he would find it useful in this connection if he could meet with A/S Shannon, perhaps in connection with UN General Assembly meetings, or even before. He also raised the possibility of

Foreign Minister Taiana meeting with the Secretary, likely at UNGA, schedules permitting. Ambassador noted that he believed A/S Shannon would be happy to have a discussion with Garcia Moritan. Garcia Moritan stated that both President Kirchner and First Lady Senator Kirchner would be going to New York and that the President was scheduled to address the General Assembly on September 25. He said that Kirchner may also participate in the concurrent Annual Meeting of the Clinton Global Initiative, where he would address the issue of poverty.

¶ 13. (C) Garcia Moritan said he would like to discuss a possible Taiana-Secretary meeting with A/S Shannon and added that it was important to review regional issues and developments, noting that Argentina's focus and concerns were on regional stability and predictability and how the two governments could work to support this. Garcia Moritan noted a discussion of bilateral relations would also be important. Ambassador said that Secretary Rice, in her interview with several Latin American newspapers during the White House Conference on Latin America, had well characterized Washington's attitude toward Argentina, that the United States considers itself a friend of Argentina and that overall relations are good but with disagreements on some issues. Ambassador also noted that the Secretary had stressed the fact that the U.S. had strongly supported Argentina during its financial crisis, intervening with the IMF to give the GoA space to implement its policies, and is disappointed that this does not appear to be recognized by the GoA.

¶ 14. (C) Garcia Moritan replied that, personally, he was in complete agreement with the Secretary. To place it in context, however, he noted that this "drift" in relations coincided with the 2005 Summit of the Americas where Kirchner, for the first time, was publicly critical of the U.S. Garcia Moritan explained that the SOA was the only regional forum in which there was no mention of the Malvinas/Falklands issue in a final document, this at the insistence of the U.S. The Malvinas, he continued, was critical to Argentine foreign policy and interests and a hot-button issue, and not getting even one "short, bland" paragraph in the Summit document was very difficult to swallow. Nevertheless, Garcia Moritan said his hope now is to look to the future, not the past.

¶ 15. (C) Ambassador suggested that one area for increased engagement could be on the nuclear energy front, citing the recent Bush-Putin Declaration on Nuclear Energy and Nonproliferation. Ambassador said that Argentina had the expertise in nuclear energy, a commitment to non-proliferation and an interest in developing new energy sources. This was thus a potential area for increased cooperation, which could even include Brazil given its nuclear energy experience. Ambassador also suggested a reinvigorated 3 plus 1 mechanism would be important. He noted the sharp differences surrounding the last meeting and stressed that all parties shared an interest in stopping terrorism-related activities as well as the other illicit activities in the region (e.g. trafficking in drugs, arms, people, contraband). Ambassador said we should think through how we can overcome differences and work together more effectively in addressing all these problems. Garcia Moritan replied that this was an interesting idea, one that the MFA had also been discussing. He noted that he was still undecided on whether incorporating these other issues into 3 plus 1, or addressing them in a parallel mechanism would be better. One concern, he reflected, was that in incorporating other illicit activities (e.g. drug, gun, people trafficking), we run the risk of diluting 3 plus 1. Garcia Moritan said this was an important issue, and he and Ambassador agreed to continue the discussion. (Note: We are working on a separate message on invigorating the 3 plus 1 mechanism. End Note.)

¶ 16. (C) Comment: Garcia Moritan has approached the Ambassador before regarding the need to "re-engage," with little follow through however. While Garcia Moritan had

little to say about concrete ways we might re-engage, in light of some candid remarks about possible life under Cristina, it appears the MFA's leadership is thinking about the post-Kirchner era. In an aside about the difficulties of coordinating government policy, Garcia Moritan noted that she, unlike her husband, welcomed open dialogue and input from a wide range of interlocutors. President Kirchner, he said, concerned about information "leakage," preferred to meet individually with ministers or with a small group of advisors. This, Garcia Moritan said, made interagency coordination very difficult, especially in light of the increasingly complex nature of foreign policy. It is too early to speculate about Cristina Kirchner's possible foreign policy interests, but the MFA at least appears to be anticipating more engagement and, importantly, they want this to include more engagement with the U.S.. End Comment.

¶7. (C) Action: Embassy strongly supports a Shannon-Garcia Moritan conversation and supports a Taiana-Secretary bilateral in September.

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